

THE

FRONTIER



A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER

MAY 1950

Vol. I No. 5

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THE FAMILY IN
INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY
(Editorial)

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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. I. No. 5.

MAY 1950

Notes of the Month

“HARD cases make bad law” is a saying that is usually quoted in favour of severity; against leniency to offenders in extenuating circumstances. But it is a saying that applies both ways. A wave of violent crime puts the public in a “hard case”, and “bad law” may be made in the heat of an emotional attempt to protect the public. The number of criminal assaults reported in the press about a month ago, together with some alarming statistics of crime which were collected about the same time, aroused a considerable demand for more drastic punishments, notably for the re-imposition of flogging in cases of dire brutality. We must be thankful that the Government were not intimidated into reversing their previous penal policy in this respect, in circumstances which put them under a good deal of pressure to do so. That corporal punishment would actually reduce the number of violent cases could not be deduced from the evidence available with any scientific probability; and although nobody need doubt, as a general proposition, that flogging like any other punishment is a deterrent, it could not be re-imposed without incurring a moral liability. The defence of society depends not only upon the force wielded by the law, but much more upon its authority. The authority of the law, which is that of society, is one with its dignity. It must be visibly free from the passions that have moved

the criminal to his crime ; so that the offender may be made to feel that the thoughts, feelings and aims of the civil power are not the same as his, but of a higher order. Any punishment, which, like flogging, blurs this vital difference in appearance, even if not in fact, lowers the spiritual authority of the law : and for that reason alone the government would have been justified in their decision.

Punishment—in Theory and in Practice

Unfortunately they were also justified, on lower grounds, in giving warning that they might have to go back upon their decision if the trouble persisted or grew worse ; for a society that becomes too violently immoral can forcibly lower the moral dignity of its guardians. It is a primary concern of governments to avoid such a deterioration, which follows inevitably if official measures take on the colour of revenge. Some legal theorists, it is true, say that there is an element of vengeance in all penal law. This is based upon the fact that when people are injured their natural emotional reaction is a desire to see the malefactor hurt. After all, society consists of ordinary people, and if they feel that the state's measures are not harsh enough, the citizens start taking the law into their own hands, which is a step towards anarchy. It is possible for a society thus to try to compel its magistrates to gratify its passions, rather than satisfy the demands of justice, but this, whether the magistrates comply or not, indicates a moral defect in the society and is unlikely to lead to any decrease in crime. On the other hand, the legal administration may be at fault, not in being too lenient, but simply in being too weak. Civil authority cannot be kept up by moral dignity and humane intention alone : it must also be sufficiently strong.

Violent Punishment as a " Make-shift "

This was a reason why so many people whose humanity and sincerity need not be questioned, recommended a return

to corporal punishment. Some of these were persons with direct responsibility for administering the law, or first-hand knowledge of it ; and it must be very worrying to find oneself with responsibility for the repression of crime but with inadequate resources to discharge it, with too few police to catch the criminals, with inadequate prison-space and not enough prison-officers. When the civil power is working from weakness, it is tempted to make up for the number of offenders who escape by more violent chastisement of those it can catch ; and although nobody can now believe much in the efficacy of such a make-shift method, some may have been lately at their wits' end to know what to do, unless the law were equipped with ampler means to perform its social function. That present means are insufficient there seems to be no doubt ; and it is not so easy to increase them. It is very difficult for governments to-day, under constant criticism for providing too few houses for law-abiding citizens, to divert scarce materials and labour to the accommodation of criminals. And in our fully employed society the prison officials, like the policemen, are under strength, and may become more so if their work is done in conditions that make it too unsatisfactory to themselves.

The Question of Cost

There are these practical conditions to be fulfilled if we are to continue to avoid the crudity of corporal punishment. And a good deal more is required if we are seeking that re-education of offenders which is the humane and Christian aspiration exemplified, for instance, in the penal reforms initiated by Lord Templewood ; reforms which included the abolition of flogging (except for some crimes committed in prison). The aim that Lord Templewood had in view, in substituting longer terms of imprisonment for flogging, was to make punishment not milder but more reformatory ; to give scope for remedial and re-educative work upon the delinquent ; which pre-supposes not only fulfilment of the material conditions mentioned above, but more expen-

sive measures. The burden of simply defending society against disorder is great, even if we leave the criminal as an individual soul out of account ; and we seem, as a society, to grudge the full cost of keeping order, whether estimated in the number of volunteers for the exacting and sometimes dangerous work of the police, or in the provision of money. But if we are seriously to set to work to reclaim criminals, the real cost has to be paid in lives devoted to the care of them. The re-education of the delinquent, by the new occupational and psychological methods, depends upon a larger number of individuals coming forward to find their vocation in this beneficent task. These are indeed formidable requirements ; but to suppose that we cannot possibly fulfil them, and must fall back upon primitive means of repression, is a counsel of defeat.

Conditions that Foster Crime

It is therefore important not to exaggerate the present dilemma, grave as it is. Compared not only with many other societies but with its own past, ours is still a remarkably law-abiding community. The statistics of crime are the more disquieting because nothing of the kind followed after the previous war, but the difference between the social conditions of the two periods also sheds light upon the causes of crime to-day. The new generation which contains so high a proportion of delinquent individuals was born in the later 'twenties or earlier thirties, when society was experiencing a major breakdown in marriage and family relations ; and this generation reached puberty just as parental and familial influences were being disintegrated from without by the conditions of war ; when school life also was often disrupted. There are other causes ; a vast increase in the number of laws has multiplied the number of legal as distinct from moral crimes, which detracts from the majesty of the law as such, and blurs moral distinctions. There is a very large number of deserters from the armed forces at large, theoretically debarred from ordinary employment,

whose contribution to the crime-wave may be considerable, though some dispute this. Altogether, this generation has received its preparation for life under unfortunate auspices, and the most unfortunate of all is the deterioration in the cohesion and vitality of family life. This deterioration has long been apparent, and it becomes of the first importance as soon as we pass beyond the question of the correction of the criminals and ask how we can prevent ourselves from breeding them. Can the family be restored under modern conditions, or must we say of it, as Ibsen did of the broken marriage, "You may patch up a fiddle but you can't mend a bell"?

Society and the Family

The weakening of the family in the present century has been accompanied by something like a re-discovery of it by social scientists, using both biological and psychological methods. Those of us who accept the Christian doctrine of the nature of man may feel in no need of scientific reassurance that the family is the essential unit of society, and that its integrity is the indispensable condition of having any social culture worth having. Nevertheless, these studies can provide valuable instruction. When, for example, one reads Arensberg and Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*¹ one is made to understand more clearly than ever before, that the family, as we conceive it by tradition and feel it, so to speak, in our bones, is the pattern of agricultural and pastoral societies that have existed in the past, and still exist here and there, as in the Irish province whose family life these writers were studying. This is a Christian society: but the relations within families and between them are first of all natural; they are shaped by the way in which the people gain their self-sufficient livelihood from the land on which they live, co-operating for this purpose and at the

¹ Published by the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. in 1940.

same time rearing the new generation that is to take their place. In such a society the homestead, ruled by father and mother, each with a clearly defined sphere of authority, provides completely and exactly the education the children need to fit them to continue the same kind of life: an education confirmed and regulated by religion, in which the local school plays only a supplementary part. The family sense extends to other families related by descent or marriage, often as far as cousins of the second and third remove; but this is not tribal society: the families live and work together in the bond of neighbourhood and in a common way of life and belief. The outstanding fact of such a community is that it is a pattern of living produced by people coping with the problems of their environment, upon one perfectly clear pre-supposition—namely that the initiative resides in the individual family group for so living its own day-to-day problems as an organic unity. The family does not, perhaps cannot, occupy any such position in the kind of metropolitan world-culture at which we have now arrived. Yet this is the Biblical and primordial conception which still haunts the back of our minds when we think about anything connected with the family, as in some sense the normal conception.

The Biblical Family in the Age of Machinery

The strength of this tradition was shown when the bulk of our society moved out of the country into the towns in the industrial revolution. The “omni-competent congregation” of Victorian days, described by Dr. Bliss in her article on *The Christian Laity* in last month’s *Frontier*, was from this point of view the re-appearance of the rural pattern of familial society in the new urban environment. These voluntary associations of families (and they were of course more than that) set the tone and created the moral atmosphere of the new societies in which they arose. In the “middle class” much more than among the workers, the old pattern was preserved; the mother ruling the home, the father earning the livelihood, the boys often contributing to the

family's income by working at an early age. But then, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of this century, there was the great revolt against the family. It had its literary leaders, in Samuel Butler, in the early Shaw and in H. G. Wells : but the literature was more a symptom than a cause ; it was only effective because the new generation found the atmosphere of the often crowded Victorian houses and their Sabbatarian restrictions intolerable. But the material cause of the weakening of the family in its new environment was that it was no longer, as in the rural scene, the pattern of society obviously authorized by the necessities of society's existence in the surrounding world. This was a more complex world, containing a bewildering variety of apparent possibilities, in which, very often, none of the children would take up the same way of life as the parents. The family's initiative as a unit was dwindling, being taken over by great commercial and bureaucratic concerns, and to be the head of a family was no longer a social position of such importance. Recently, however, when the process has gone much further, social scientists have begun to discover the family as a biological necessity for society, because it is the fount and origin of social adaptability, indeed of social intelligence. This is not the place to discuss their arguments ; but two significant attempts to take action upon them have lately been " in the news ".

Attempts at Family Re-habilitation

One of these, which has been well-known for many years, is the Peckham Health Centre, which it has just been found necessary to close down. This enterprise, which was primarily undertaken to investigate the conditions of health in families, provided a communal centre for a large number of families in a working-class neighbourhood ; it received generous support, and built an institute for family recreations and clinical observation. Medical as this venture was in spirit and conception, it was an attempt to understand the difficulties of the family in certain typical modern con-

ditions ; to find out how to restore vitality to a group of families ; and as this necessarily extended to relations between as well as within them, it became a social experiment of considerable scope. The idea that " Health Centres " should form part of the new National Health Service was in part at least derived from this pioneer work, and as the Peckham institution could not be self-supporting, its survival in present conditions would seem to depend on its being incorporated in the official scheme. This, however, appears not to be possible. There are no doubt particular obstacles, but the general reason can be inferred from the fate of another attempt to restore family initiatives, the Family Health Club at Coventry. Here, an attempt was made to carry ideas derived from Peckham into a wider sphere of action, taking advantage of the extensive re-building necessary around that city. Several hundred families were enrolled in the enterprise ; the financial means were available, and if it had been permitted, the life of a new suburban area would have been shaped by the families themselves, with guidance and expert help of their own choosing. It is all too easy to see why this project was turned down by the local Council, upon whose permission and co-operation it of course depended. The living conditions of the people are now regarded as the concern of the Government, applying the general principles of the Welfare State through its administrative organs, the local political administrations among them. A group of families so largely ordering its own neighbourhood would be too much like a new kind of local administration, and its contribution, however good, might present the existing bureaucratic organization with complications.

Family and Welfare State

The welfare state means well by the family. State welfare work as we have it is the product of innumerable measures devised during several generations to protect families as well as individuals. A succession of waves of unemployment and destitution has trained the state to act not only as

relieving-officer to the impoverished, but as foster-parent to their families. The greatest extension of this state maternalism took place in the recent war, with the evacuation of families and the multiplication of relief agencies of many kinds, and it was then that the welfare state was recognized by name and welcomed as the pattern of social management to which we are committed. Now, those biological students of society whose work we have been considering think that this welfare pattern is out-of-date. They appreciate the benefits it provides, its controls of housing and sanitation, its provision of milk, medical aid, ante-natal care and so forth ; but the fact that the state takes so large a part of the family's income and spends it for the family's good means that the family is not in a position to deal spontaneously with its environment as a living organism should be. Previously it had an environment it was often simply unable to cope with ; now it has one that is largely managed for it. The risks of life, previously excessive, are much reduced, but so is the family's sphere of effective choice, of social initiative. The consequences, upon a biological view of the case, would be a weakening of the cohesion of the family, with a decline in the sense of its importance ; and the steady increase in the number of broken marriages does suggest that people are finding marriage and family life less worth while. The scientific remedy would be to seek for ways of enhancing the function of the family, to give it a more significant sphere of performance. But it is obviously hard for the modern state to think in terms other than those of the individual and the collective, hard for planners to leave any real initiative to the associations that arise spontaneously and demand their own sphere of action, involving modification and exception to general rules. This kind of " managed society " is a new thing : a great deal of thinking as well as experimenting will have to be done before the methods of the welfare state will be refined and amplified sufficiently to give scope for the social potentialities of the family.

Meanwhile in the Western world, the family receives formal respect as an institution, even if prevailing social theory has little use for it. Our case is better than that of Eastern Europe, where communist zealots trample on the Christian family, or of China where they try to extirpate the Confucian family. All such efforts will fail, because the family is nearer to the sources of life than any political or economic movement. The state of the family is, as used to be said of Austrian politics, always desperate but never hopeless. It is natural, and yet nature is always breaking it up: and only religion preserves it as the vehicle of spiritual culture from generation to generation. Ultimately it stands or falls by the recognition that God is our Father, and mankind his family of families; and the ancient Biblical family, transfigured as the holy family of the New Testament, is still the highest and clearest expression of this understanding that has been given to man. Where the Christian family flourishes, the natural law is fulfilled in a climate of grace, and even its reflected light in other and less happy lives is a power for social good. Where its redemptive influence wanes, social intelligence also declines, disintegrative forces enter, and in the last resort society has to deal with its most intractable problem, the reclamation of lives that have gone so far wrong as to become violently anti-social. Whilst we try, as in duty bound we must, to treat a wave of crime by the most remedial methods, it is not surprising that society begins to be aware of its profoundest cause, and to see that prevention is infinitely better than cure. Sir Harold Scott, the first chief of police to have openly attributed a sudden rise of crime to a recent disturbance in family life, has opened up the more permanent question of the defence of the family: and we may be thankful to those who are still striving to make room in the modern world for those growing points of society in which alone individual and social culture can be perfectly united.

INTERIM

National Thanksgiving

The Lord Mayor of London's Appeal for a National Thanksgiving Fund was certain to produce a rich response ; and the amount received directly by post in the first fortnight amounted to £370,000. The object of this fund is to provide university hostels for students of the United States and the British Commonwealth studying in England. Such institutions are urgently desirable, and it is by a natural impulse that the people of Britain, who benefited so greatly by the generosity of their English-speaking friends during the war, think first of expressing their gratitude in a plan that will help the children of their benefactors. Second thoughts, however, have been expressed in some quarters ; there has been some debate in the Press, whether it would not be an even better expression of gratitude to extend the scheme to all foreign students without distinction. It is indeed true that the best and purest expression of gratitude for benefits received is not back to the giver, but on to someone else. That is the way in which we must seek to thank God, and, in the last analysis, it is the only way we can express complete gratitude to one another.

Vested Interests in Vice

In the last fifteen years London has seen a marked increase in the display of pictorial literature of a more or less indecent and provocative character. Paris, which used to be considerably worse in this respect, has become better : anyone now visiting that city for the first time since the war soon notices at least a superficial improvement. This is a result of the policy of the present French parliament, which has abolished the state regulation of vice and set its face firmly against pornographic publication ; a policy which was largely due to the pressure of Christians of the French Reformed Church, and the vigorous advocacy of one of its members, M. André Philip, a deputy in the National Assembly. These innovations were difficult to bring about, not only because vice, in the French capital as in some other places, is a very great vested interest extending into political circles, but because many good citizens were doubtful whether political efforts to deal with so profound a social evil might not produce new and equally intractable problems.

* * * * *

These misgivings were not groundless. A French pastor tells us that the effect is in many respects similar to that of the American prohibition

of strong drinks. The closing of houses of ill-fame has brought most of their personnel out into the streets, so that in certain streets at certain hours, conditions are more unseemly than ever. Under-the-counter sales of indecent literature and illustration have become a bootleg traffic which the police spend much of their time in tracking down, and at which, it is believed, some of them connive for profit. Our informant had no doubt, however, that the new régime is, on balance, of moral and social advantage, if only—though not only—because it provides some protection for children and adolescents.

American Christians on their Economic Responsibilities

We have received the Report of a remarkable Conference upon "The Church and Economic Life" held at Detroit in the U.S.A. in the middle of February. This meeting was held under the auspices of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and was attended by 382 delegates from official church bodies, including 22 denominations. It was, therefore, fairly representative of intelligent Christian opinion in America; and the recommendations at which it arrived were in every instance supported by 93 per cent. or more of those who voted. The report is, therefore, specially to be recommended to all those who fear that the economic world-supremacy of the States has exposed the older cultures and under-developed areas of the world to a ruthless financial imperialism, which will have devastating social and cultural consequences. For it is clear that those who were present at Detroit were just about as well aware of this danger as their 'opposite numbers' in Europe would be. Indeed, one is forced to feel that, if an ecumenical council of European Christians met to-morrow to draw up advice to Americans on the discharge of their economic responsibilities, its report would be no better in substance from a European point of view, and probably less clearly expressed.

* * * * *

These Americans, at least, needed no exhortation to shoulder their moral responsibilities. They could not have been more deeply impressed by the duties incumbent upon them as the richest and most productive people in the world. Convinced that war is not inevitable, they were practically unanimous in the opinion that their economic strength should be directed to the discharge of three basic and inter-dependent responsibilities: (1) to contribute to a just and durable

peace, (2) to assist other countries towards self-support and a decent standard of living, and (3) to promote social and economic welfare in their own country. Moreover, these Americans seem to have been well aware of the danger that their economic system, the strongest in the world, could disintegrate the weaker productive systems by its sheer financial force, however well-meant the foreign aid schemes of their State Department might be. The Report contains several warnings on this point. For instance, it proposes that programmes of technical assistance should be offered to under-developed countries only so far and so fast as the latter can absorb and use such aid constructively for their general welfare. There are warnings against the dangers of "abrupt basic changes in established cultures", and "exaggerated hopes as to the speed with which the economic life of countries can be transformed". It is urged that assistance should be rendered only when the receiving country "shares in the planning and is willing to co-operate effectively"; that America should demonstrate that her interest in other countries' welfare, while related to her own self-interest, is free from any desire to exploit or repress or to seek any special privileges. "We must not assume that the particular economic patterns of our own country are necessarily adequate or efficient for other nations." The positive recommendation is that technical assistance should be rendered through the development of credit unions, agricultural and other co-operatives, and types of organization which lend themselves to ownership by the inhabitants themselves of the under-developed areas.

* * * * *

It is, of course, easier to give good advice, even to ourselves, than to carry it out in action. The report of a council of American financiers and business men on the practical problems of American export would not make such congenial reading for other nations; still less, perhaps, would the report of a conference of American or any other military experts on the necessities of the strategic situation. But this does not mean that the Detroit pronouncement is merely "hot air". It means that the forces of good will exist, but can be strengthened only by response to them. For example, European Christians might produce a similar report upon the use that should be made of assistance given, in the manner and the spirit of the Detroit recommendations. That would be an appropriate response, and it would increase the likelihood of beneficent and acceptable action.

The Moravians

The Moravian Church of Great Britain has recently joined the World Council of Churches, and this accession brings the number of member Churches up to 156 in 44 countries. The Moravian Church, which is also known as *Unitas Fratrum*, was founded in Bohemia in 1457. After a period of disruptive persecution, it was revived in 1722 at Herrnhut in Saxony by Count Zinzendorf. It was introduced into Great Britain in 1738, and exercised an important influence on John Wesley. The Church has an episcopal constitution. Though its province in Great Britain has only about 3,100 members, it has a strong missionary and educational tradition, and is still expanding in other parts of the world.

German Refugees in Germany

West Germany is faced with two acute problems to-day which have come together to create the most serious clash between Germans and the Allies since the end of the War. The clash is a sign of hopefulness, because it reveals the moral strength that has flowed back in to the people of Western Germany. The two problems are those of the refugees and of German unity. The incident is the decision of Eastern Powers to eject many more of the German people now living in East Prussia and other former German provinces under Polish or Russian rule. Western Germany is already overcrowded with millions of refugees and adequate steps have not been taken to absorb them. It would therefore seem reasonable for the Allies to impose some restrictions upon the entry of more refugees into Western Germany; especially as the action is clearly intended to embarrass the Western Powers in their efforts to rebuild Western Germany. But, for the German, the question is not one of policy or arithmetic. It means preventing fellow-Germans from seeking safety in their own country and it has become a trial of strength between the German Parliament and the Allied Occupation Powers. Have the Allies the moral right to prevent Germans moving to another part of their own land when they are in danger? Clearly they have, if it threatens the country with chaos. Ill-fed dwellers in the Eastern Zone would flood westward if there were no restrictions. But to German eyes these new restrictions, which mean refusing asylum to hundreds of thousands of victims, are compared with the freedom of Czechs to flee to Germany and settle there. One of the prime movers in this German protest is Minister Alberty of the Lower Saxony Provincial Government. He has

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recently called upon Germans to do everything they can to defy these instructions of the Allies and let their people in. Alberty is no enemy of the British and, as a devout Lutheran pastor, he is no tool of the Communists. He is simply a German expressing his people's anger at being compelled to turn back the flood of their fellow Germans, fleeing from the East. Alberty has been prominent in efforts to settle refugees and no one can accuse him of not realizing the problems involved. Perhaps a quotation from an article recently published by him will show the emotional content of this problem.

"The black-red-gold flag at the Frontier post of Besenhamen will be dragged in the mud, if one German police official prevents Germans from crossing the frontier at this point. And all the beautiful words at Bonn about the unity of Germany will be like snow in the sunshine, if we Germans leave one way unexplored which will open this closed frontier."

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE WORKING WORLD

IT is a commonplace now to admit the widespread alienation of industrial workers and their families from the churches ; yet there has been little serious experimentation to build up the church within the working-class world—to baptize, as it were, part of its very fabric, of its community life. The reasons for this alienation are several, and would take us into an analysis of the instinctive attitudes and climate of thought of modern man, and we are probably as yet not very skilled in tracing the origins of the thinking which is characteristic of different social groups. Often the causes given for the alienation of the workers are quite superficial, and any approach to the problem that is not frivolous must take account of the whole background in sociological and political terms.

This article is concerned with only one aspect of the matter—the question how, in English industrialized society, a leadership or ministry can be thrown up indigenous to working people, which in its turn can produce Christian groups, Christian community, in the social setting most intractable to the normal ministrations of the churches. Theoretically we have come to believe (and it is a great gain) that Christian witness in the secular world is primarily through the laity dispersed in their various callings, the ordained minister being a minister of Word and Sacrament, concerned with building up the congregation in the parish or district, and ministering pastorally to those whom he can get to know in the area. Unfortunately the theory breaks down, particularly in the large industrial areas. Few of the laity know as yet what witness really means in their situation, even when they are aware of such a duty ; their lives are set in the several communities of home, leisure, work, vocational group, etc., and even when they do witness, it need have no immediate relevance to the local church they

are concerned to build up. Moreover, even when the laity are willing to engage in work on the "frontier", only too few find themselves in the works and factories, or at home in the world we are considering. And unhappily the situation is not improved when those outside the church identify "church" with "clergy", and by the prevalent feeling that the minister (in spite of his being hardly better off economically) comes from a different world, a different class, out of touch with working people. Granted much confusion and even error in such thinking, we must admit that the professional training, status and calling of the minister, of the clergyman, does mean that *his* natural settings are not those of the workers—workshop, Trade Union, pub and club, sport, council house, etc. And where the minister diligently visits, he can touch only a few of the people outside the congregation, and that so rarely, that he is in fact "visiting", coming from afar, and not as "one of us". If there is just some truth in this it is not surprising, considering the class consciousness of our society, that even in predominantly working-class areas, there are so few manual workers in the congregations.

No doubt such lay resources as the churches already have in this field should be discovered and estimated, confronted with the problem and carefully trained—and we are very tardy in doing this. But we also need experimentation, in securing ministers who are completely at home in the working-class world, and set in that world by their work and natural habits. It is with such a possibility that this article is concerned. At this point we could easily be led into a pretty theological dispute. Would such a ministry be "lay" or "clerical"? Are we not in danger of confusing their functions within the Body? It would be unwise at this point to enter into such a discussion, important though it is. But we may consider several points. One, that the professional ministry, as developed and inherited by the various denominations, in no way belongs to the *esse* of the Christian ministry; this is abundantly clear from the practice of

different communions at different periods of Church history. (Compare for example—the Trollopian English gentleman parson, who “stood on the same holy ground as the pheasant and the partridge”, the Vicar of a town parish organizing every kind of social and religious facility, the Army Padre, the Methodist local preacher, the Catholic presbytery, the priest-workman in modern Paris.) Again, the Church has not always made sharp distinction between “lay” and “clerical”, other orders having been recognized. What is important is that leadership within the working world should be recognized, appointed, equipped, ordained and commissioned to initiate Christian thinking, and to build up Christian community in that setting. And another very practical point is that, economically, it appears that the churches will find it increasingly difficult to train men for the ministry in the traditional ways, and even more difficult to sustain them as a professional body after ordination. The Church of England (and no doubt other communions) is in the unhappy position of crying out for more men, who, if forthcoming, in the numbers required, would become a charge on the financial resources of the Church that would probably be impossible to meet.

Let us again say what we are visualizing—the throwing up of leadership or ministry within the life of the working world, associated with the thought—“He’s one of us”. To digress historically for a moment, it is fascinating to consider that Methodism, which produced, more nearly than any other communion, an indigenous Christian industrialized society, could boast in 1850, according to Dr. Wearmouth (*Methodism and the working-class movements of England, 1800-1850*) of over 20,000 laymen who were local preachers, and of class leaders, who were the “very life of Methodism” not less than 25,000. And he quotes Horace Mann (*Census of Religious Worship—Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3*) who said that the remedy for the estrangement of the working classes from the Established Church was the adoption of the “plan afforded by the Methodist community, in which some ten

or fifteen thousand laymen are employed not merely at the work of visitation, but also in that of preaching. . . . Nothing, probably, has more contributed than this to their successes amongst the working population". Horace Mann's advice apparently fell on deaf ears, and he does not say (what is very probable) that the successes he cites were due not so much to the lay preaching (which can be but a stop-gap for the minister), as to the lay leadership which was inseparable from the people and the community concerned. Much has happened since 1850, and a whole new climate of thought has been produced by many factors, but there is much to show that this sociological law, so well illustrated by Methodism, could still operate, if there were vocations to Christian ministry within the working world.

Of course for many years now, all the denominations have accepted candidates for ordination from working-class backgrounds. In 1918 for example, the Church of England, following the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, produced five reports that were to bring new life to the Church. The excellent one on *Christianity and Industrial Problems* touched upon the need of working-class candidates. The Vicar of Portsea (now Archbishop of York), making such a plea in a letter to the Commission, said—"We clergy, with our public schools and Universities behind us, look at political and social questions from a different angle from that of the vast mass of the working class. . . . I am urging most strongly the importance of removing the difficulties which stand in the way of a working-class ministry, for I believe that this would mean the removal of much of the suspicion with which the industrial classes regard the Church, and would result in the infusion of a new and strengthening element in the ministry of the Church." Since that date many of the difficulties have been quite rightly removed, but it is hard to believe that the hopes expressed have in fact been realized. The reason is that the new recruits were abstracted from their working-class setting for training, and entered into a professional status, which, despite the best

intentions to the contrary, involved their separation from the secular world. It would seem that, along this line, the remedy would have to be more radical—the equipping of men for ministry, certainly some kind of ministry, without removing them from their setting either during or after training. Indeed they would need to be trained for ministry and leadership within their setting. Clearly, much is being asked in terms of ability, sacrifice and spirituality. Clearly, training must be very different from the traditional methods, less “academic” but more rooted in strategy, not less soundly theological, but less intellectual, and more existential. Some things would be lost, but in other ways the gain might be overwhelming. For it is hard to imagine, from any human standpoint, the building-up of the Christian community within the working-class world without its own leadership.

It will be asked, How is such leadership to be produced, discovered or recruited? This indeed is the real question, and to find and prove answers to it is the urgent task that must at all costs be faced in the years immediately ahead. It is an even more important question than another that is now being raised—How can we train the laity that we have got? This has a likeness to yet another question recently asked by a correspondent in *Theology*—Why does the North of England produce so few ordination candidates? The call to Christian ministry does not come like a bolt from the blue, but as a response to the presentation of Christian Faith—it is an answer to the Word that is heard. And this gives some indication of what must be done to call out leadership within the working class world. Quite deliberately the preaching Church through its agents must be more determined to meet, to know, and to speak with the alienated world. It can mean quite practical steps. For example: In recent years the Church in the diocese of Sheffield has done a good deal of research in this field, and it is evident that within industry itself lay Christian leadership can be called out in the course of a lengthy and intensive period of work. There are some

men who accept Christianity for the first time, and from the very beginning express their faith in terms of secular obedience, and in relation to their fellows at work. There are others, already worshipping Christians, who can be shown the possibilities of some kind of apostolate, and brought together to consider an adequate expression of "witness". One good and obvious thing that men of these kinds can do, is to group their comrades together for discussion and argument, and this is something that can happen regularly, although it is quite a different thing from organizing what are called "Christian cells". There are also those we may call the "semi-Christians", men without any contact with a Church, but who see a significance in some part of the Faith in humanist terms, and will collaborate with an industrial chaplain in getting men together. The writer can think of a number of men of this kind—several of them conveners of shop stewards in huge works, men who are proven natural leaders inside and outside of their works, set inextricably in the workers' setting, and who are willing to round up their fellows on the shop floor to involve them in talk about Christianity.

It is from men of these kinds that we must hope for Christian leadership, and from the groups in which they in turn naturally find themselves. But first, the men must be discovered—which perhaps is only possible within their own setting—they must accept a responsibility for some kind of witness, be shown possibilities, and they must be assisted, or their assistance must be enlisted, in the cause of digging Christian faith down into their own setting. Only time, *serious* experiment, and hard work along these lines could show where lay Christian ministry was in fact being exercised, ways in which it might be expressed and trained, and the precise nature of its "character" and ratification by the Church. But it should be emphasized that this preliminary work of making the right kind of contacts, sowing the seed in the right places, all the selective visiting required, and so on, is itself an immense task in a large industrial city, and

itself needs a trained team of men. It is only when this work is well under way that the possibilities beyond appear on the horizon.

At the same time that this kind of approach to the question is being developed, others must be pursued. One we have already mentioned—an examination of the lay resources already available in this field, in order to share with them the problem, and to help them to make ventures of faith and to take the initiative in leadership. Another proposal of interesting promise is that some candidates for ordination after they have done their theological studies, should undertake a lengthy spell of manual work, in order to discover the problem for themselves and explore the opportunities—and it is already known that there would be a response to such a call.

In all of this, the end should be kept strictly in view—a leadership or ministry indigenous to working people, which in its turn can produce Christian groups. However modified the means may have to be, the changed and still changing character of our society will show more and more clearly that this is the right objective. This of course does not mean “writing off” parish ministries, though it may be that clergy training will change considerably, and other kinds of ministry become accepted. So long as there are Christians rooted in time and space, there will be the need of territorial churches, with their attendant ministers—but it is also true that supplementary measures, perhaps on a very small scale during the experimental period, are needed if we are to grapple with the problem of the Church and the masses of the people.

E. R. WICKHAM.



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THE CHURCH UNDER NON-CHRISTIAN RULERS

THE rapid success of the communists in China, and the growth of other revolutionary movements in Asia, makes it necessary to state the problem of the Church's relationship to political authority in a new way. For the places in which the missionary work of the Church has been most fruitful in the last century have been those in which the government has been either Christian in origin, or at least not hostile to the Christian cause. At the same time the countries from which missionaries have come are the democracies of the West, which are now being challenged by communism in the West as the people of Asia are in the East. The Church therefore has to meet the challenge of living under forms of government which are at best indifferent, and may be hostile to the Christian Faith.

A study of the Bible and of the history of the Church shows that although it is a great help, it is by no means essential for a Christian to live under a Christian form of government. In the Old Testament we can see that although there is a period of theocracy, followed by religious monarchy, there are many instances both before and after, in which religious Jews are by no means averse from serving under foreign governments and the worshippers of foreign gods. In telling the stories of their heroes, they did not think it at all strange that Joseph should rise to be Chief Planner of Egyptian state socialism, or that Elijah should be commissioned to anoint a Syrian king. At the time of the Exile, Cyrus, King of Persia, is regarded by Isaiah not only as the instrument of God's order, but as Yahweh's anointed one, or Messiah: "whose right hand have I holden to subdue nations, before him . . . for Jacob my servant's sake . . . I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me".

The Jews found that they could worship God and hear his voice in many strange and unlikely places.

In the Gospels we certainly do not get the impression that Jesus thought the temporal authority of Judaism was essential to his preaching. He rejected this conception of the Kingdom of God at the Temptation, and found more faith in the Roman centurion than in the blind leaders of his own people. Yet despite the favourable impression we have of Romans in the New Testament, there is never any sentimentality about the *Pax Romana*. Our Lord contrasted the authority of the Kingdom of God with that of the Kings of the Gentiles ; among the Gentile rulers the most important people were those who dominated others. In the Kingdom of God the most important were those who served.

St. Paul's use of his Roman citizenship, and his respect for Roman authority, was probably characteristic of Christians before Nero, and this was not surprising when we remember that the law and order created by Rome was a wonderful achievement even by modern standards. (Think of the difficulties you would have if you tried to follow St. Paul's route from Jerusalem to Antioch, and thence to Asia Minor and Greece to-day ; there would be visas and passes to be obtained from the governments of four states, and the possibility of running into warfare in two of them.) But even so, neither St. Paul nor St. Luke were blind worshippers of temporal authority. St. Paul stood up to the magistrates of Philippi and accused them of abusing their authority, and St. Luke has no hesitation in saying that Felix, the Roman Governor, was ready to accept bribes. Respect for authority was tempered by criticism, and criticism by respect ; for even after the persecutions had begun and the Christians had come to think of Rome as Babylon they still exhorted each other to honour the king.

As we turn to the Second Century we find that the Christians still believed in the goodness of the Emperors even though they persecuted the Church. Tertullian asserts that Christians pray regularly for the Emperor, and there was

always the recognition in the Church that Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were good rulers, though some of the severest persecutions took place in their reigns. We know from Trajan's correspondence with the younger Pliny that the Emperor was in fact a fair-minded man, and would not have Christians condemned simply on the evidence of anonymous letters. This tradition of Trajan's fairness lingered on until he somehow found his way into Dante's Paradise! It says much for the Early Church that its members were ready to believe the best of their persecutors.

But again Christians did not merely accept authority. They bombarded Emperors and officials with open letters and "apologies", claiming justice, and explaining the Christian position. The Epistle to Diognetus claims that Christians were in fact better citizens than anyone else. At the same time the writer recognized that there is something more than loyalty to the state, and that for the Christian "every foreign land is a fatherland and every fatherland a foreign country." His citizenship is in heaven, but this makes him not a worse, but a better citizen of his own state.

With the Third Century persecutions became more severe, and there is a modern touch in the trials of bishops and other leaders, the aim of which is to secure not so much conviction but apostasy. Christians found themselves up against new problems, and one of them may not be irrelevant to the situation in China, namely the question whether or not to flee in face of persecution. Then, as now, there was no general rule. Persecutions were sporadic, until Diocletian's final onslaught, and usually if there was persecution in one place there was peace in another. It was this which led Clement of Alexandria to leave the Theological School in Egypt and to spend the latter part of his life in Asia Minor. He defended his position by quoting Matthew 10. 23: "If they persecute you in this city, flee into the next."

Tertullian, however, who was a rigorist, decided that persecution was the judgment of God, and that it was sinful

to try to escape. This view can certainly claim to be akin to the Gospel injunction that we should rejoice when men reproach and persecute ; but it is also true that there was a certain morbid attraction about martyrdom at that time, and that the confessors sometimes acquired a reputation for sanctity which was later abused. This, together with the matter of the lapsed Christians, was the problem which confronted St. Cyprian of Carthage, and we can see that similar questions may arise for the Church in these days. Cyprian himself caused a good deal of discussion by going into hiding for awhile during the Decian persecution, but he never lost touch with his diocese, although he left Carthage, and maintained that the important thing was that the work should be carried on somehow. His decision was endorsed later by St. Athanasius, who was exiled five different times from his see in Alexandria, and by the teachings of St. Augustine. There is thus strong Christian authority for choosing one's ground in making a stand ; and it may not be irrelevant to recall that in both the Third and Fourth Gospels there are examples of our Lord's evading arrest before His time had come. We should remember too that Cyprian did finally follow his Lord to a martyr's death.

The Church's attitude towards civil authority at the time of the persecutions was, then, far from pessimistic ; for the Christians, despite their sufferings, were all the time forging ahead. They had a sense of victory which was not only other-worldly. They could see—and so could their opponents—that they were the movement of the future. It was this realization which led Diocletian to make his all-out attack, and it was the same reason which persuaded Constantine, when the attack had failed, to make terms with the Church. From that time, with few exceptions, the Christians of western Europe have looked to their rulers as allies. It is only within the last century that they have had to contemplate living under governments which have either "cared for none of these things ", or have, in the case of Nazi Germany and Russia, attempted to stamp them out.

But beyond Europe in many parts of the world Christians have had to learn the art of living under non-Christian rulers, and we may compare the experience of Christians under Islam with those under communism. For modern communism has been compared to Islam, and there is certainly a resemblance. In both movements there has been a restless movement of reform, an emphasis on the equality and brotherhood of man, an impulse to conquest, and at the hands of both the Christian Church has suffered its most severe defeats. And yet in Islam and in communism there is a religious fervour and a sense of apocalyptic self-confidence which wins the admiration of the Christian in spite of himself; he feels that the Moslem and the communist are more like estranged brothers than irreconcilable enemies. Many Christians feel that communism, like Islam, is a kind of heresy, which has appropriated one part of God's truth, though blind to its full revelation in Christ. We may add that this feeling of respect is in some ways mutual. There it a tradition of toleration in Islam which stems from Mahomes himself, and there has been some toleration in practice. The communists in China have proclaimed freedom of religion in the areas they have occupied and as far as present observation goes this has largely been respected. In Russia where the specifically anti-God movement seems to have broken down there would now seem to be more toleration in practice than formerly; and though this unfortunately cannot yet be said of Eastern Europe, it must be observed that the very fact of such large numbers of our fellow-Christians in those countries is important evidence in regard to this whole question of living under non-Christian rulers.

At first sight the comparison of communism and Christianity with Islam and Christianity may sound discouraging, for it might seem that the Church in China is destined to become a kind of fossilized community like the Abyssinians or the other separated Churches of the East. But Dr. Toynbee has reminded us that the story of the Christian minorities under Islam was not wholly dark, and was in some cases

what he calls a successful response to the "challenge of penalization".

Under the Ottoman Empire Christians were excluded from government and from the ownership of land, but "the adherents of the penalized denomination responded by becoming experts in those pursuits to which their activities were now forcibly confined",— and he goes on to describe how Christians acquired the monopoly of such callings as grocery and market-gardening, and in the case of the Phanariots of Constantinople became large-scale merchants who entered into trade negotiations with the western world, and eventually became entrusted with the highest diplomatic positions in the state. In the Eighteenth Century, "it looked," says Toynbee, "as though the result of western pressure might be to endow the Empire with a governing class drawn from the victims of centuries of racial and religious persecution."

It is thus clear that Christians can live for many generations under non-Christian governments, and may become a vital factor in a community so controlled. Chinese Christians then need not look forward to becoming a fossilized remnant, but may become at least a live minority, and by God's grace may surely have a larger destiny.

We cannot leave this subject without a reference to the Crusades ; for there is a dangerous similarity between the preaching of some Christian leaders in the Twentieth Century, and that of their predecessors in the Eleventh on the right way to deal with anti-Christian Governments. Anyone who feels that the world cannot be made safe for Christianity without a third world war, is thinking in much the same way as the medieval popes and feudal princes. There is the same mixture of motives, the same justification of constant threats and abuses by the alien power, the same feeling of being cut off from another part of the world. But the power of Islam was not to be overcome by a frontal attack, and it should be clear that this is the least likely way to gain a victory over communism.

There were, however, a few Christians who saw that the way of the Crusades was neither Christian nor wise. St. Francis himself went to Damietta and had his famous interview with Soldan, and the contact between the two religions and cultures was partly responsible for the new wave of missionary endeavour which appeared in the Thirteenth Century. Ramon Lull, the Franciscan tertiary, began his mission to Tunis about the same time as his fellow-Franciscan, John of Montecorvino, was starting for China where he became Bishop of Cambulac or Peking. Islam and the other non-Christian religions were a stimulus to advance ; and we might well ask whether communism both in the east and west is not proving a stimulus rather than a threat to missionary action. If we reject the method of the Crusade we are surely committed to the way of St. Francis.

When we think of the relations of Islamic to Christian culture, we are reminded that the early Schoolmen, to whom Aristotle meant so much, had to rely upon Arabic channels for the source of their knowledge, and that it is by this way too that much of our scientific thought has come. " The history of science, though it begins with Greek contemplation, is set on its right track by passing through the stage of Moslem experiments ", and as Sir James Jeans observed, the Mohammedans by their translations as well as their discoveries " did no small service to science in providing a storehouse for knowledge . . . and assuring that what had been gained should not be irretrievably lost ". Thus the minds of Christendom and Islam never completely lost touch with each other.

We can see that in the same way, although there are grave differences, there is no complete barrier between communist and Christian thought in our time. Each has influenced the other and will continue to do so. Ideas have a way of going in and out of iron or bamboo curtains, and Christians will inevitably be found promoting such intercourse where it can be done without prejudice to the foundations of faith.

Another comparison has been suggested in thinking out the relation of Christian Faith and communist government—the distinction, springing ultimately from St. Augustine's "City of God", between the spiritual and the secular arm, which formed the ideal of the Middle Ages. This was that the Emperor should carry out in political life the spiritual decrees of the Church. But in practice, the Church, despite its ambition for ultimate control and its enormous influence on social life, had to rely for protection on the secular arm; and in economic affairs, although they made a great effort through laws upholding the "just price" and against usury, to temper the harshness of feudalism and incipient capitalism to their own flock, the medieval ecclesiastics had to admit that this was an area largely outside their control.

If we draw the parallel to-day, we might say that in China, the Church must be prepared to abandon a great deal of political and economic life to the "secular arm" of communism. It would indeed be healthy if the Chinese Church—and not least its missionary helpers—recognized that as Christians we have neither the power nor the responsibility for maintaining order in China; nor can we choose what sort of a political and economic system shall prevail. Christians have, therefore, to learn somehow to live in the new order.

But the experience of the Middle Ages also shows that the Church can never quite abandon its concern in the world's affairs to the secular arm. There will always be what the Church may call bearing witness, and what others may call interference, for the Church must always be trying to insert the elements of justice and mercy into whatever system is established.

Our final testimony of Christians who have lived under rulers of another faith must come from the Chinese Church itself. The story of the Nestorian Church in the T'ang Dynasty reminds us not only of how long ago Christians first came to China, but how quickly they won their way into government circles in Chang An (Sian). Reliance

upon the imperial power was perhaps inevitably, the "*sine qua non*" of the Nestorians, and this fact together with the rival power of Buddhism may account for its comparative lack of progress. Nevertheless, the Church must have had an inner vitality, for it survived the T'ang Dynasty, and was considered important enough, six hundred years later, to have a special officer appointed by the Mongol Emperor to look after its affairs. The Franciscans, who as we have seen arrived in China at this time, also had to rely upon the protection of Kubilai Khan and his successors; and when the Dynasty came to an end in 1368, there is no further mention of Christians, until we hear of them again at the time of the Jesuit missionaries in the Sixteenth Century.

It was the policy of the Jesuits to present themselves at the Court of the Ming Emperors as western scholars who came to offer the Chinese sages the best that western science and mathematics had to give. They revised the calendar, introduced clocks and astronomical instruments, and incidentally instruments of war. They emphasized very strongly that Christianity was not opposed to ancient Chinese culture but was in fact a fulfilment of it; and although the Pope decided against the Jesuits in the Rites' controversy on this subject, which seriously threatened the whole Christian future in China, yet this attitude of adaptability, within a non-Christian culture and under non-Christian governments, has remained a characteristic of Roman, and to some extent of non-Roman, Christianity in that country.

For the Church in all its forms has had a practically continuous experience for almost four hundred years, of making day-to-day and year-to-year arrangements with governments which have been very variable, but which have all been non-Christian. The Chinese Church should therefore be in a better position than most to work out relationships with a non-Christian authority. It is true that for the last hundred years, the Church by its close association with the western powers has been in a favoured position, but those days are passing, and we may remember too, that the Church has

also played quite a prominent part in its influence on the revolutionary movements, from the time of the T'ai Ping Rebellion with its queer half-Christian visionary leader Hung Hsui Chuan, through Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek to the present turn of events which prominent Christians in China are able to hail as the dawn of a new day.

Thus we may see that, as in Europe, the Church in China has always made some impact on social and political life without being able to control the situation ; and now in a time of revolution, though he remembers the fatal ease with which revolutionaries may deceive themselves about their own virtue, the Christian cannot keep right out of the movement however irreligious it may be. And yet he can never throw himself right into it, or against it wholeheartedly, even though it may be depicted as the Kingdom of Heaven or its opposite.

The Christian is perhaps like a sea bird following a ship in a heavy sea. The bird darts back and forth, sometimes flying alongside the ship on its plodding way, sometimes soaring away out beyond it, then resting on it, or feeding on the scraps from the ships's galley. But the bird lives in another dimension ; it makes rings round the ship ; it can see better than the captain which way the ship is going, though it is the captain and not the bird who has to steer the ship. And there is something about the bird which may remind the sailors of a half-forgotten world, and they know they are going in the right direction when they see it, so that its presence gives them hope.

That is a very imperfect parallel, and we must not press it too far, but it may illustrate the way in which the Church is bound to be in and out of every situation, sometimes seeming to go the same way as a government or revolution but all the time seeing farther, and from a different angle. Christians must therefore always be the despair of those who want plain answers, and they seem to suffer from seeing too many sides to every question. But what they have to offer is the ability to lift the whole subject on to a different plane,

and to see that what is happening in the world to-day is not a matter of religious diplomacy, but something which takes place under the hand of God. They engender a confidence which those who either believe in, or despair of, systems cannot have. They believe that God knows what He is about, and that faith and obedience to His word must be at the base of any hopeful programme for the future. They know that the Church may be led into strange paths in the coming half-century, but that both the Church and its history in the world are under His hand.

GILBERT BAKER.

AN 'INNER LIFE-HISTORY'

FORE DAWN¹ has sent one reader at least back to a re-reading of its precursors *Midnight Hour* and (in part) *Treasures of Darkness*. Of these, the former was the personal confession of a tempested soul at grips with circumstance, outer and inner, during the opening phases of the war: a soul that felt itself to be "a microcosm of the world-soul, a mirror of its agony"; like it the victim of a dark demonic power "which is the very drive of life", and yet through all the horror of that darkness conscious of a radiant core within, a holy hidden brilliance. There was the death-wish alternating with, and belied by, the affirmation of new life awaiting manifestation—more light and fuller. The mood of *Midnight Hour* was volcanic; but the beauty of its phrasing, its psychological penetration, its passionate sincerity and determination to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning the catastrophic mid-murk of humanity's darkest hour, placed it at once in the forefront of the mystical writings of our time. It was diagnosis rather than remedy, but the prescription was as it were latent. In *Treasures of Darkness*, by the discipline of

¹ *Fore Dawn* by Nicodemus. Rockliff, 10s. 6d.

daily Lenten readings from the Revised Lectionary during the closing phases of the war, the writer with equal honesty sought to discover (in his own words) "the radium in the ore". These meditations, though less arresting than the former probably by reason of their self-imposed objectivity, are valuable as a mystical exposition (rather than subjective interpretation) of Holy Writ. They are like the delvings of a bold miner into the deep mountains of the true, who has made up his mind to accept whatever he may find there rather than anything that he wishes to find.

In a chapter on "Personality as a Whole" in his book *Holism*, General Smuts, pointing to the need for our times to discover the spiritual kernel of personality, desired the frequent publication of autobiographies by persons who have had "real inner life-histories", in the form of diaries faithfully recorded and without undue restraint. "On the whole, the lives of poets, artists, writers, thinkers, religious and social innovators, will be found the most suitable for the purpose of holistic study." Certainly the meditations of Nicodemus would provide a fruitful field for such research. Their mood is reminiscent sometimes of Amiel, sometimes of Keyserling, though they owe nothing to either; they have their own recognizably distinctive note.

The method of *Fore Dawn* combines the characteristics of its precursors: the interplay of reflective with descriptive writing which made *Midnight Hour* a colourful nocturne, and the biblical background which gave to *Treasures of Darkness* an austere delineation. All three reveal, by casual intermittent reference rather than by studied documentation, considerable erudition alike in the humaner and the diviner studies; but *Fore Dawn* confirms the previously-formed impression (of one reader at least) that this resolute and honest thinker is at heart a poet: a poet not only in feeling and phrasing, but also in insight. And it is the poet of insight, after all, who sees deeper into life's mysteries than the rationalist. (Plato, who was both, is the classic example; where human reason faltered, divine imagination took wings

and soared.) Had Nicodemus been a painter he would have been a landscape-artist, with pastels for his medium; nature's kind benison in storm and shine, cloud-shadows racing over corn, free-flowing lines melting away to far horizons, all "lightfoot elusive loveliness" (his words) would have inspired his brush as they kindle his thoughts. There are some really exquisite passages of pure prose-poetry in this book, such as sections entitled "The New Ice-Age" and "The Apocalypse of Snow."

Midnight Hour was the posing of a question. But every problem squarely faced contains within itself the key to its solution, and the answer was already there implicit in the question. The question was (though not exactly in these words): "What is the meaning of the burden of life's mystery?" *Fore Dawn* renders the answer explicit: a burden is something to be borne, and only in the bearing of it can its meaning be elucidated. Again the writer sees himself not as an individual so much as a microcosm. (One can but record one's relief, in passing, that he abjures such barbarous conventional clichés—current among the self-styled intellectuals of our day—as that what he has to say "in this context" is "relevant to the contemporary situation"!) What he does say is this: "In the darkness of the modern scene I know that to speak of dawn is to flout all the prophets of doom and the sombre signs in our skies. It is also to flout a Cassandra in my own soul. I do so, not from any desire for cheap solace, but from a compelling sense of the veracity of this title to, not the ominous march of our apparent history, but to the inward pulse of the heart of our world" And that is finely said. If however this reviewer may venture to express a regret, it is in respect of the use of that recondite term "existential" to denote the philosophic approach to the problem. It is a term which has been much bandied about of late in dialectical circles, and in a perplexing variety of subtle shades of meaning. Confessedly, Nicodemus uses it in the original sense propounded by Kierkegaard, for whom it was a salutary counterblast

to the abstractions of Hegelian metaphysics. But surely there are simpler and more intelligible equivalents, such as "concrete" or "experiential"—as opposed to "abstract" or "conceptual". Philosophically, it presupposes the activity of the percipient in perception, or of the experient in experience. It repudiates the idea of separation of object from subject, of *aliud* from *ego*, and affirms their fusion in the "transcendental unity of apperception". In fact, it goes back beyond Kierkegaard to Kant, though it was given by the former an ethical and religious emphasis. Berdyaev has used it in the sense of "participation". For Schweitzer it is the principle of life-affirmation through life-denial, that is, in the sacrificial sense of responsibility, reverence for life. It is the spirit's Yea-saying to circumstance—*on doit s'engager*! Rightly Nicodemus says: "Acceptance—engagement—suffering—at root the life-attitude which all these terms imply is one and the same. To *accept* is to take to oneself, to assume responsibility for that which is accepted; to *engage* is to take up a challenge, or to stake one's life on a wager; to *suffer* is to support, sustain, endure, to bear a burden from beneath it This is not passive resignation to fate; it is a bearing of the burden of being, getting under it and sustaining it as a man gets under a heavy weight and lifts it on his shoulders." The result is the transformation of experience, and also a transmutation of consciousness through heightened perceptions. But more, it is (so we think Nicodemus would say) the discovery by those for whom God is the supreme Object of life's quest, that it is God who is in quest for them. (Would he agree that the immanent and transcendent are really one?)

There is a striking corroboration of Nicodemus' solution to the problem in two broadcast addresses by R. H. Ward, published in *The Listener* in September of last year and entitled "God's Absence: God's Return". The death-wish may betoken either mere desire for extinction or a positive acceptance of catastrophe. If the latter, it results in awakening to a Real World. It is to "take a full look at the worst",

and "sudden the worst turns the best to the brave". "What was unendurable becomes joy; what was remorseless, mercy." "To turn from experience is damnation; to accept it, salvation." Space forbids detailed demonstration of the close correspondence in thought between these two courageous thinkers who have thought and written quite independently of one another. It is, however, much too remarkable to pass unnoticed.

Fore Dawn is an advance upon *Midnight Hour*; it shines with a new certitude. May we hope that it will be followed, when the time is ripe, by another entitled *Morning*?

GEORGE SEAVER.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

JOINT CONSULTATION ABROAD

Dear Sirs,

A week or so ago I received the first three numbers of *The Frontier* and was truly delighted with them. My congratulations and very good wishes for the future. Two articles which I particularly liked were: "Human Relations in Industry To-day" and "The Christian Attitude to the U.S.A.". They are, of course, matters in which I am closely involved by my profession. Our concern in the first is perhaps not apparent until it is realized that the services are very large employers of civilian staff in their base installations and offices both at home and abroad. These civilian employees work almost without exception alongside, and on the same work as, folk in uniform. This means that the question of Joint Consultation is not an easy one to solve in a manner appropriate to both systems, quite apart from the many problems which arise from the integration of two totally different sets of conditions of service.

Out here the problem is made even more difficult by the fact that the services, with the army as the dominant partner, are the largest employers of labour in the Colony of Singapore where trade-unionism under official encouragement and guidance is largely a post-war product. We have a Joint Consultative Committee for Singapore and in

many of the individual depots, Works Councils, etc. In due course the full Whitley Council machinery which operates in all government offices and depots at home will be introduced with joint consultation at all levels. This implies education not only of a lot more serving officers, but also of the trade-unions, in the technique of joint consultation. On both sides there is apt to be impatience. The ordinary officer, who perhaps has not had experience of dealing with civilian employees at home, is accustomed to making up his own mind about a host of matters affecting his troops' welfare and conditions of work after taking as much advice as he thinks necessary, but without discussion and argument in committee. The local trade-unionists, most of whom are from Ceylon or India, are extremely self-conscious both in respect of race and of their theoretical knowledge of their functions. I am in a somewhat unenviable, but intensely interesting, position as a staff-officer concerned in trying to hold the balance between both.

With all good wishes.

FRANCIS MAJOR (*Malaya*).

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